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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/411,773	10/04/1999	GEORGE VARGHESE	C0441/7942	8788

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EXAMINER

LOGSDON, JOSEPH B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2662

DATE MAILED: 11/30/2001

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/411,773

Applicant(s)

VARGHESE ET AL.

Examiner

Joe Logsdon

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 21-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-23, 27-38, and 40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 24-26 and 39 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) ✓
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) ✓
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

Objections:

1. Claims 24-26, and 39 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
2. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it contains the legal terminology "said." Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).
3. Claims 37-40 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claim 36 is a claim to an apparatus. Claims 37-40 depend from claim 36, yet claims 37-40 only recite steps to be added to claim 36.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph:

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
5. Claims 30-35 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear whether the steps recited in claims 30, 32, and 40 are intended to be performed only if the group identifier assigned to the destination and the group identifier assigned to the source are different, as specified in claim 23. Claim 31 depends on claim 30 and is therefore similarly rejected. Claims 33-35 depend on claim 32 and are therefore similarly rejected.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. 103(a):

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

8. Claims 21-23, 27-29, and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Natarajan.

With regard to claim 21, Natarajan discloses a method of operating a conference bridge (a type of network bridge) that comprises a first and second plurality of ports through which network communications pass to and from the bridge (claim 10; the “first means” and “second means” inherently comprise pluralities of ports). The conference bridge in combination with both means is therefore the network bridge. All conference participants are connected to an operator via the conferencing bridge (column 2, line 67 to column 3, line 8). A conference then commences (column 3, lines 24-29). During a conference it is inherently the case that communications are received on one port and transmitted out the other ports of the bridge preselected ports, i.e., those ports connected to the other conference participants. Natarajan further teaches a signal processor that provides identification of the telephone line used by each conference participant (abstract). This suggests that a group identifier comprising these telephone identifications could be used to identify the group participating in the conference. Although Natarajan does not teach such group identification, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that a group identifier is assigned to each port to identify the group that is using the port because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier.

With regard to claims 22 and 23, Natarajan teaches that a source and destination are identified (the operator identifies the participants and therefore identifies the sources and destinations; column 2, lines 41-66). Natarajan further teaches a signal processor that provides identification of the telephone line used by each conference participant (abstract). This suggests that a group identifier comprising these telephone identifications could be used to identify the

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group participating in the conference. Although Natarajan does not teach such group identification, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that a group identifier is assigned to each port to identify the group that is using the port because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier. It would therefore have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Natarajan so that a group identifier is maintained for both the source and the destination because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier. Although Natarajan does not teach that users with different group identifiers do not participate in the same conference, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Natarajan so that users with different group identifiers do not participate in the same conference because such an arrangement would allow users to easily select a conference group by simply providing a group identifier.

With regard to claims 27, Natarajan fails to teach that a protocol type is assigned to each group identifier. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that a protocol type is assigned to each group identifier because such an arrangement would enable the required protocol to be determined before a user joins a conference.

With regard to claim 28, when Natarajan is modified, as indicated above, so that group identifiers are used, it is inherently the case that no two distinct group identifiers having the same protocol type are assigned to the same port because no two distinct group identifiers are assigned to the same port.

With regard to claim 29, each port in Natarajan may inherently have more than one group identifier assigned to it—one at a time.

With regard to claim 36, Natarajan discloses a method of operating a conference bridge (a type of network bridge) that comprises a first and second plurality of ports through which network communications pass to and from the bridge (claim 10; the “first means” and “second means” inherently comprise pluralities of ports). The conference bridge in combination with both means is therefore the network bridge. All conference participants are connected to an operator via the conferencing bridge (column 2, line 67 to column 3, line 8). A conference then commences (column 3, lines 24-29). During a conference it is inherently the case that communications are received on one port and transmitted out the other ports of the bridge preselected ports, i.e., those ports connected to the other conference participants. Natarajan further teaches a signal processor that provides identification of the telephone line used by each conference participant (abstract). This suggests that a group identifier comprising these telephone identifications could be used to identify the group participating in the conference. Although Natarajan does not teach such group identification, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that a group identifier is assigned to each port to identify the group that is using the port because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier. Natarajan fails to teach a computer program product installed on a networked computer, wherein the computer program product comprises computer program instructions that when executed by a computer cause it to implement the method. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that the method is implemented by a computer program

product installed on a networked computer because a computer could efficiently implement the method, and the only way to cause a computer to implement a desired method is to use a computer program.

With regard to claims 37 and 38, Natarajan teaches that a source and destination are identified (the operator identifies the participants and therefore identifies the sources and destinations; column 2, lines 41-66). Natarajan further teaches a signal processor that provides identification of the telephone line used by each conference participant (abstract). This suggests that a group identifier comprising these telephone identifications could be used to identify the group participating in the conference. Although Natarajan does not teach such group identification, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Natarajan so that a group identifier is assigned to each port to identify the group that is using the port because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier. It would therefore have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Natarajan so that a group identifier is maintained for both the source and the destination because such an arrangement would allow users to easily join the conference group by simply providing a group identifier. Although Natarajan does not teach that users with different group identifiers do not participate in the same conference, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Natarajan so that users with different group identifiers do not participate in the same conference because such an arrangement would allow users to easily select a conference group by simply providing a group identifier.

Reason for Allowance

9. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art does not teach or fairly suggest the method, or the computer program product that implements the method, of operating a network bridge having a first plurality of ports comprising the steps of assigning a group identifier to each port; receiving a multicast packet having a multicast destination address on a first port; sending the multicast packet having a multicast destination address out on all other ports having the same group identifier as the first port, as specified in dependent claims 24, 25, and 39.

10. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Bedingfield, Sr. et al., Dunn et al., Shuman et al., Wellner et al., Chakrabarti et al., Gottlieb et al., Hogan et al., and Kerr et al. are cited to show the state of the art.

Conclusion

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph Logsdon whose telephone number is (703) 305-2419. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hassan Kizou, can be reached at (703) 305-4744.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4700.

13. **Any response to this action should be mailed to:**

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

Or faxed to:

(703) 872-9314


For informal or draft communications, please label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT".

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive,
Arlington, VA, Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

Joe Logsdon

Patent Examiner

Saturday, November 10, 2001


HASSAN KIZOU
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TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600